



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Angel Rios, Jr.

**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO CITY COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED
TO THE BEAUTIFYSJ ANNUAL
REPORT**

DATE: May 22, 2019

Approved

D. D. S. L.

Date

5/22/19

BACKGROUND

At the May 7, 2019 City Council meeting, the City Council heard an item on the BeautifySJ Annual Report. Two Council memos were released under that item: a memo from Councilmembers Jimenez and Esparza dated May 3, 2019 and a memo from Councilmember Arenas dated May 7, 2019. Both memos made recommendations for improvements to BeautifySJ programs. The Administration offered and the City Council directed staff to return through the budget process with a Manager's Budget Addendum (MBA) responding to the recommendations included in the Council memos.

ANALYSIS

This MBA provides responses to recommendations contained in the two Council memos issued under BeautifySJ Annual Report item. Specifically, it responds to recommendations 1a and 1b in the Jimenez and Esparza memo and recommendations 2a, 2b, and 2c in the Arenas memo. Some of the recommendations align with existing efforts or can be accomplished with existing resources. A few of the recommendations require additional resources, and some require additional work to explore potential solutions.

Jimenez and Esparza Memo

Recommendation 1a: Prioritize translating all educational materials and the My San Jose App into Spanish and Vietnamese and begin adaptation in additional languages.

Recommendation 1a proposes that BeautifySJ educational materials be translated into multiple languages. Multiple departments maintain outreach materials for programs associated with BeautifySJ. While many of these materials are already available in Spanish and Vietnamese, some language gaps do exist. As part of its ongoing effort to coordinate BeautifySJ programs, the BeautifySJ Working Group will identify gaps in translation of outreach materials and work to

provide materials in multiple languages. Staff will also translate existing printed outreach materials for the My San Jose app.

This recommendation also proposes that staff translate the My San Jose app into multiple languages. Language accessibility for My San Jose is already part of staff's work program, and is related to a broader effort to design inclusive digital services, addressing factors such as digital literacy and device limitations. The 2018-2019 Operating Budget allocates \$1.5 million to support development of My San Jose 2.0, the next iteration of the My San Jose technology platform. Translation of the app is planned to occur as part of the My San Jose 2.0 project. One of the key implementation considerations will be how to ensure we have not only the technology but also the people and process in place to ensure effective two-way communication between residents and staff in multiple languages.

Through user research with Spanish-speaking and Vietnamese-speaking residents, staff identified other factors that work alongside language access to promote the inclusivity and accessibility of My San Jose services. The most important of these factors are outreach, multiple reporting channels, and usability.

- **Outreach:** Outreach is key to ensuring that all neighborhoods and demographic groups within San José are aware of how they can access city services.
- **Multiple Reporting Channels:** Given variations in digital literacy and technology adoption across San José's diverse population, providing multiple channels for residents to report problems is a core part of the City's existing strategy for inclusive access to City services. Of 152,000 reports submitted to date in Fiscal Year 2018-2019, 32% (49,000) were placed through the mobile app, 24% (37,000) were placed through the website, 28% (42,000) were placed through the Customer Contact Center (either by phone or by live chat), and 16% (24,000) were placed through Transportation or Environmental Services staff. Continuing to manage and unify the resident experience across all reporting channels is an ongoing priority for the My San Jose program.
- **Usability:** Research findings show that making the app easier to use is as important to non-English-speaking users as translation. All residents will benefit from an app that is designed with simpler language, increased use of visual icons, and a more intuitive flow. Importantly, simplifying the text is a key step in making the translation efforts successful.

Staff will consider how all of these factors interact synergistically with language access as translation options are developed through My San Jose 2.0. Staff has prepared the Request for Proposal (RFP) for development of My San Jose 2.0. Staff will be able to set the launch date once procurement and project timelines are known, but staff anticipates that launch will not occur any earlier than late 2020. The procurement timeline is affected by competing priorities and uncertainties regarding staff resources. Given this timeline, staff will explore interim solutions and funding options for making service requests available in multiple languages in the current My San Jose 1.x platform, which may require additional funds for the existing vendor contract. Staff will also explore options to accelerate the procurement process. In addition, staff will work to highlight existing reporting channels that already support multiple languages, such as the Customer Contact Center.

Recommendation 1b: Prioritize Dumpster Day funding in communities currently plagued by illegal dumping where hotspots have been identified.

The 2018-2019 Operating Budget allocates \$180,000 to support Beautify SJ Days. Beautify SJ Days can encompass a variety of activities, including neighborhood cleanups (dumpster days), murals and other beautification efforts. In practice, however, these funds are mainly used to support dumpster day events with the goal of reducing trash, illegal dumping and blight. The \$180,000 total is divided equally among all Council districts (each district is allocated \$18,000) to fund these events.

The 2019-2020 Proposed Operating Budget includes continued funding for this program (now called the “Neighborhood Beautification Program”) in the amount of \$180,000 and centralizes responsibility for the program within the Anti-Litter program in the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department (PRNS) to better coordinate and leverage resources.

Recommendation 1b in the Jimenez and Esparza memo proposes that the City prioritize dumpster days in communities with illegal dumping hotspots. If the Council wishes to pursue this idea, staff has developed a proposal for funding additional dumpster days, beyond the \$180,000 included in the proposed budget. Specifically, staff proposes adding \$50,000 for dumpster rentals and adding 0.50 FTE of Regional Park Aide to staff the additional dumpster day events. Assuming an average of six dumpsters per event and the same per-dumpster cost as the city pays in the current fiscal year, \$50,000 would fund approximately 20 additional dumpster days.

Instead of dividing this additional funding by district, Anti-Litter Program staff would select which neighborhoods to provide with dumpster days based on the proximity of the neighborhood to illegal dumping hotspots, whether the neighborhood has received a dumpster day in the recent past, and other indicators of need developed in consultation with other City departments and council offices. Funding needed for this proposal is summarized in the table below.

Targeted Dumpster Days to Prevent Illegal Dumping				
Funding Use	Personal	Non-Personal/ Equipment	2019-2020 Total	Ongoing
Dumpster rentals		\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	
0.50 FTE Regional Park Aide	\$ 17,690		\$ 17,690	
Totals	\$ 17,690	\$ 50,000	\$ 67,690	

Of the \$180,000 allocated to this program in the current fiscal year, staff estimates that \$30,000 will go unspent (that amount could be lower if additional dumpster days are scheduled before the end of the fiscal year). As an alternative to adding \$50,000 for dumpster rentals as described in the above proposal, the Council could direct staff to rebudget any money from the 2018-2019 fiscal year that remains unspent to support dumpster rentals for targeted dumpster days in 2019-2020. If the Council chooses this options, staff would still need an additional 0.5 FTE of Regional Park Aide to support the additional dumpster days, at a cost of \$17,690.

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Arenas Memo

Councilmember Arenas' memo makes three recommendations intended to improve support for underserved communities in applying for BeautifySJ grants. Staff responds to each recommendation below.

Recommendation 2a: Instituting multi-lingual workshops in areas that are considered high-needs across the City.

PRNS is responsible for administering the BeautifySJ Grant Program. Additional staff resources would be needed to provide workshops on the BeautifySJ grant process in multiple languages. Specifically, the Department would need to add two 0.50 FTE Staff Specialists to expand Spanish and Vietnamese support for the BeautifySJ Grant Program, at an estimated cost of \$111,000. These staff would be responsible for facilitating workshops for potential applicants in underserved communities, providing translated outreach materials to residents, and providing grant management support to monolingual grantees that are awarded BeautifySJ grant funds. The Staff Specialists would develop the infrastructure to support monolingual grantees. The Department would then assess the need for ongoing support for BeautifySJ grantees.

The below table provides a summary of costs associated with enhanced multi-lingual support. It includes the staff positions discussed above, as well as non-personal funding for translation of outreach materials.

Multi-lingual support for BeautifySJ Grantees				
Funding Use	Personal Services	Non-Personal/ Equipment	2019-2020 Total	Ongoing
Two 0.50 FTE Staff Specialists	\$ 111,000		\$ 111,000	\$ 111,000
Translation Services		\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Totals	\$ 111,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 114,000	\$ 114,000

At the May 7, 2019 Council meeting, questions also arose regarding translation of BeautifySJ grant application documents and translation of the WebGrants system (webgrants is the City's portal for submission of grant applications.) Pursuing these translations, in particular pursuing translation of legal documents associated with the grant-making process, raise a number of legal issues. If Council decides to fund the two 0.5 FTE Staff Specialists for the next fiscal year, staff would use those resources to increase outreach to underserved communities, and through that outreach evaluate what kind of translation services, process improvements or additional assistance may be most valuable in increasing access to the BeautifySJ grant. This additional outreach and evaluation would allow staff to better judge which strategies would be most impactful for underserved communities.

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Recommendation 2b: *Prioritizing grant requests in zip codes that are known hot-spots and allowing groups from these areas whose requests are denied a two-week period to adjust proposals for resubmission.*

For the last two years, BeautifySJ has been able to grant funds to all neighborhood associations and other organizations that passed the minimum qualifications and for projects that met the scope of the grant program. As the grant program grows, this may no longer be the case, as there will be more competition for the limited grant funding. The Department will develop a prioritization system that incorporates need into the rating system. Additionally, the Department will explore its options for allowing resubmission of a proposal with the City Attorney's office.

Recommendation 2c: *Streamlining grant payment process to lessen up-front financial burden on neighborhood groups for activities or events planned between the time of the grant approval and grant payment.*

The 2019-2020 Proposed Operating Budget includes converting a 0.50 Analyst I/II Part-Time to 1.0 Analyst I/II Full-Time position in PRNS to support the Department's existing grant-making administration workload. This position will prioritize the development and execution of the Fiscal Agent agreement. Once the Fiscal Agent agreement is executed, payments can be issued to the grantees as soon as their MOUs are executed. The Department will also make adjustments to the 2019-2020 BeautifySJ Grant Cycle timeline, with a goal of having MOUs with grantees ready to be signed before October 1, 2019. Combined with the City's ability to streamline the signature process through electronic signatures, staff expects these steps to improve the expediency of grantee payments.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department, the City Manager's Office of Civic Innovation, and the Information Technology Department.

/s/

ANGEL RIOS, JR.

Deputy City Manager

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